



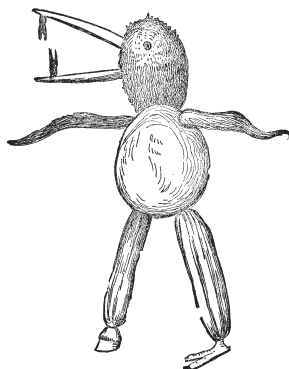
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THE ORIGIN OF FEAR

D.M. Aderibigbe

There is my favourite senior boy,
holding onto the evening's
garment; his lover refused

to let him step his dirty feet
back into her life.
So he wet his flaming

intestine with a small bottle
of insecticide.
The matron is squeezing

those feet now. And the head nurse,
pouring all of her knowledge—syrups,
capsules—Into his withering mouth.

Then, there is me, trying to close
my eyes. Because of him,
the night is scared to arrive.

TWO POEMS

Toby Altman



fig. 5. I want to write about the city as an effect of deletion: a shadow, a graveyard, a series of imaginary islands. I would begin, for instance, with the graves in Lincoln Park. I would say how the park was stripped of its corpses to make it clean and safe, a place where money stays. Or I would write about Daniel Burnham, who asked the city to build an archipelago, a human frontier, a harp of garbage, in the lake. Who has time for that? I take a picture of the lake just to prove I wasn't there. I too live on trash. A woman's face with an orange price tag on it. \$7.99. Supplication. A book of coupons. Wild onion collapsing in the throat. And what if the meek refuse to inherit?

healing grasses

cannot help

I want to write about the city as extension, delay, a limb that buds from the body of the police. I want to argue that architecture is the act of transforming sound into matter, producing the bodylines, which is to say, the suffering, of noise. I would say, "We are all sheltered in suffering noise." I want to ask, as elegantly as possible: "In what does human life consist?" I want to give a savage answer: it is a travelling wound, which inflicts itself on the landscape. As a child I was taught to draw an object by fleshing the dark around it. In this way, I learned to think of the body as a luminous institution, an unmarked space where money travels. I want to write on every envelope I see, "This is what my body needs."



fig. 6. Idea for a performance: four cylinders of concrete are poured on a podium. This may be accomplished by an invisible hand. It may be the effect of an inaccessible past. Or, the performance may deploy the bodies of men in overalls and hard-hats, nakedly apparent to the audience. They create an interior, a space for flowering. They undress the city around them. They display, as if for the first time, the way the city frames and subdues the swamp, until there is no onion left. Now, each building on the grid cuts a space where the air, wounded by compaction, bitterly flourishes.

my career

is grief

Idea for a performance: this was the architecture of everyone.

Thankfully, it belongs to the institution. The institution devours

the concrete to reveal the absence that was already there. It announces to the press, "FOREVER is LOSS whatever." Idea for a performance: I take its money anyway. It becomes the wound I live with, cancerous tourist. Idea for a performance: sometimes during sex, I rehearse my failures, setbacks, and regrets. This produces the desired effect: i.e., everyday I am more abundant and so is my rent. Meanwhile my body gentrifies the bed. Everything it touches turns posthumous white. Idea for a performance: everyone is exhausted and no one has time.

FAWNS

Jon Boisvert

An eagle drops a day-old fawn into the power lines one night, & all of our houses go dark. In the morning we walk outside & see the newborn, slick with dew & afterbirth, hanging on the wires. The thing is, Zeus used to send eagles to symbolize his decrees, & there was always a seer nearby to read them right. There are no seers in town anymore, though, & so we stand with our heads turned up while the morning sunrise fills with more & more fawns.

FIVE POEMS

Edgardo Núñez-Caballero

Each summer chooses
its ghosts.

Soundtrack and setting:

The white noise of water
falling on water.

A diagonal beam of light
scratches the image.

Each summer tents its blank sheet:

Below, the dead
keep talking of love
in their impermeable dialect.

...

In the lost margins of a map, Phantom Limb is a spot between silence and the place where the undertow of a dangerous music takes us.

There, recompense clings to the body's history like two emptinesses that, locking eyes, trip and fall.

There, no one forgets the lesson: that the navel is the scar traced by the flight of two identical birds on the belly of the world.

Phantom Limb is comparable to a pupil that dilates around a Japanese wave sketched on the open seas, which, barely visible, seeps through the porthole of a pirate ship called Phantom Limb.

There, not everything is said, not everything is written.

There, one waits.

If the ghosts come back, we try to care for them. We watch them breathe quietly alongside the shifting light. They are the subtitles that no one reads in a movie theater full of sleeping people.

There, one waits, or hopes that the wave ages faster than the eye.

...

I sleep and my love keeps watch.

I sleep and my love's voice hums "A Suite for Toy Piano."

I sleep and my love tells me where the light goes when we switch off the lamps.

I sleep and my love's voice drops to the ground like a gold-plated bracelet.

I sleep and my love says that it swallowed an anchor, that it swallowed a bird, that it's impossible to know when a bird on a branch or a wire is staying or going.

...

Its name is longitude and latitude

a swarm of speed
and slowness.

In its name the idea of love travels
like a blur of artillery
over advancing horses.

In the distance there are trees
the possibility of a ship.

...

The day that Isidore Isou invented youth, a naked woman wrote in the air with her index finger: "The mission is to point and shoot shoot shoot at the heavens until the stars all fall out like baby teeth. One by one."

Translated by Tess C. Rankin

DUST

Violet Callis

Peeps of

rats. It snows,

at last.

My mask

falls,

thanks to

a friend.

The wind.

It's so

ugly.

And quiet.

A man and woman duck beneath a sign.

Whole months closed to them, shallow puddles they could only enter
in a dream strait.

His apartment. The cinema.

A California parking lot.
Dry sun on her hair as she walks without a coat, inhuman.
Afternoon, then.
A low-res Mona Lisa on her wall.
The angel telling them: we are alone.

A man and a woman are one,
but choose not to say it.

The river knows its grayness. The buildings don't
but flash any
way.

DECEMBER POEMS

With the leaves all dying
With the propagandists tired
Soaking bits of bread in grease
With the girls turning all night
With the money sunken green
In the hours
With the silver
With the lake

And a secret bright and pulsing crumpled on the train

Yes

the green leaves twitch and the red lamps

shine on the pavement.

gold

December leaks in cracks and puddles in the sidewalks next to cars.
Its artists tend toward the inhuman.

Walk in the morning, stand outside.
They organize themselves. They carry a pew out of a back room.

The store that sells chalices.
Between the truth and the lie.

The river wags in its container.

Quick days, lake's shivering sun.

One sign reads:

Let there be no illusions.
Let there be no beautiful teenage lovers.
No tearful reunions in the park.
Seashell gowns or California.

A hedonistic, destructive person. Yesterday, they recycled an orange.

Urge, the ultimate golden corridor.

The yew bobs at the edge of sky.

Two feet at the evergreen road.
A second warm and full of seeds.

Sunrise ebbs.
The chant of a stranger
while metal wave glimmers.

Youth
beheaded.
Symbol music.

Cape shadows. Rushes streams.
Wave flecked.
Jerking hair.

Murky under.

Rejoice, Carnival,

Cardinal
Jacaranda
Daisies carpet
Feet a cloth
Miracle
Lines and rays
Scratch mark.

The man on the bench gazes at Christ's purple banner.
Drama and naturalism, the label reads.

John the Baptist, speak.

calf
dove
suspended rations.

I seek a shadowed and passing Heaven.

I haven't found wilderness.

CURRENTLY OVER KANSAS

Michael Earl Craig

You'd smashed a fairly
expensive painting
over my head.
You were not mad,
said not a word.
I sat there with
my oatmeal before me.
Head poking through
canvas. Frame down
around shoulders.

I'm traveling across
this great country
sideways, 5 or 6 feet
above the ground,
probably 75 mph,
legs just dangling,
not bumping into
anything, wearing only
a windbreaker.

DIMES

We destroyed the banana, peeling it.
There was a white witch.
The white witch drove a dark Prius.
Dimes dropped from a passing helicopter
were just beginning to hit the deep snow.

At the end of a trying life it's comforting
to watch a dog drink water.
It's somehow gratifying to watch plants
get watered.
To see water poured into a plant
and darken the soil and disappear.

Each dime hits and penetrates the snow like a wink.
A noiseless blip.
Dimes, being dropped from a helicopter.
Disappearing into the snow.

THE TURIN HORSE

Ricsi is an actor, known for The Turin Horse (2011)
-IMDb

After leading a typical horse life
and having some tough stretches
of neglect, as horses sometimes do,
Ricsi lands the lead in Béla Tarr's
The Turin Horse.

She plays the farmer's horse.
She has a deep sadness in her eyes,
dislikes moving with a carriage.

Tarr has to find an actor to play the farmer
who can work well with Ricsi.
Someone Ricsi wants to work with.

The farmer is played by János Derzsi,
best known for *Werckmeister Harmonies* (2000)
and *Satantango* (1994).

Erika Bók plays the farmer's daughter.
She's best known for roles in
The Man from London (2007)
and *Satantango*.

The only other actor in Tarr's film is Mihály Kormos
(*The Man From London*; *Werckmeister Harmonies*; *Satantango*)
who plays a babbling Nietzschean visitor
who stops in for a drink and a monologue.

The film is narrated by Mihály Ráday,
cinematographer and actor,
and son of actor Imre Ráday.

Wind and boiled potatoes feature prominently.

Tarr and his cinematographer never discussed Nietzsche.
It was not necessary.

THE PROBLEM

The insect said
to the rabbit
the problem is
I know who my
heroes are and
I know who your
heroes are. You
only know who
your heroes are.
What? said rabbit.
You don't even
know what kind of
insect I am
said the insect.
What? said rabbit.

SOME TEA HAS EVAPORATED HERE

for Tyler Meeks

Two clouds cast shadows on
the lumpy mountain. The shadows
move like amoebas.
Like moods. Stains. No, moods.

I thought I might want to write a while
about the Augean Stables. I felt I
wanted to make some connections, draw
some parallels.

Instead I'm looking down
into my tea cup at
the brown residue that
was recently tea.

A cloud inks the mountain briefly.
A shadow rippling over pine trees.
It is Saturday.
I hold out my finger for a monarch.

BEEPS OF LIGHT

Callie Garnett

Who says misery loves company?
I don't.
Yet here I sit looking at pictures...

Dadaism was a movement in which people
Now use it to describe a point in life when
After great and vociferous conviction
The jaw detaches from the face
& shoots out into the world of its own volition

Projectiles also occur in nature
Spinning, swirling
Other verbs the body made intransitive thru Dance
Among the first repetitions we governed

Looping the small park
I do my Australian accent for Dan
& in that moment there is only the accent
Nothing else exists

They invented	Leafy High rise-view
They invented	Rabbit skin glue
They invented	looking through the window
They invented	inner truth

(I stole that from Matt Klane)

And I will fill my mouth with dense foods as I eye the trash bags

*

I run into him once (Matt) jogging
It's the dog hour, Neon collars against the night
Whizzing, romping
Has it all been one single hypnosis?

*Frail islands of foam on the grey sea / through the rounded square windows
of the D*

Beeps of light when
The pink/blue ball is thrown
The dog runs past a nimble wrist
A pizza it would like to sleep with

*

Remember in the dance ballet in *Singin' in the Rain*
The mobster tosses the coin up badly
& has to jerk his hand quickly to catch it?

Or remember Ann Murray in *Easter Parade*
So smug, spinning till her hair is slapping her
In the face, slapping as only the hair of another can
This poem began with a Dadaism

Dreamed Lorraine locked me out of her dressing room
refused my interview
I came home, lay on my back
my tongue out, my nose against the world, swaying toward it, breathing
heavily...

SEAM OF THE EARTH

after J.H. Prynne

Today
an evil person is coming to steal the oil
from my body

by means of extraction unknown to me, &
Ainsley just wants love.
Ainsley just kills bugs.

I flash on my moments of glory &
wish I cd watch them in the sky, Jean at my side
night during the day too, *since the stars*

circle the hills & our motives w/out reproach
squirming around
to balance on the hammock

we sing, impersonate old lady
impersonate small girl (this ok, goddess of age?)
Ridiculous Pain Dog.

Speeding motorboats on
the bay make spray so big it hid them
like a knife in feathers bouquet—

*

But truly, mere serenity is a slender means.
There is not much time left, and singing's my purpose in life

the swaying never stops, the expanse grinding with it

I can hear every smallest growth.

In some moments I say a thing sharply dumb
blunt it with profundity to cover my ass...ever do that?

Then I like to get our talk all slippery like media, like wayward
babysitter. How should I know what you read?
& how should I know what you see?

Near fainting, I save the grub from Ainsley who wanted
to chop it up with a rock—not the best way.
Not the best way

to punch holes in the Ball jar lid with a knife near her face...
but we got the grub in there with the spronjy green lace
a fly in the glass, still & maybe dead
I don't know I just see it, Ainsley.

Her big eyes & braces & the way they work together

conversing in flashes of purpose
she not share. These spasms
you see in children.

Indicate.
Not Indicate.
Indicate.

*

I dreamed Ainsley came to us from a Catholic place

& when the nuns snapped the Kodak she always
looked to the side so
every conversation with the body culminates in silent flow

No devotion, as if to say I'll never
watch the road. My God lies on the
seam of the earth, with that partly turning
partly falling metaphysic...

[USING INTELLECT'S METAL PINCERS]

Gemma Gorga

Using intellect's metal pincers, we made an effort to lift color from matter, like someone lifting the gelatinous membrane covering the internal organs. Then we tried extracting heat from each grain of sand—the patience of one-by-one—until attaining a domestic universe. Isolating the pronoun from the verb, leaving only the hard bone of the infinitive. Isolating the bubble from the soap, leaving only the beauty of the rising sphere. Isolating pain from pain, leaving only the pain.

[THE HOUSE MIRROR RETAINS THE MEMORY]

The house mirror retains the memory of all the souls who have gazed at themselves inside it. Like a beneficent tutelary god, it keeps alive the genealogical tree of our transparency. Every afternoon we pass before it, to the hallway upstairs, to the hallway downstairs, as though we only knew how to walk on a spatial axis, an invisible rail that goes from north to south of our life. Some day, we'll make a ninety-degree turn and cross the mirror toward the east.

Translated by Sharon Dolin

OBJECT LESSONS

Kimiko Hahn

*Some things move in and dig down
whether you want them to or not.
Like pieces of small glass your body subsumes when you are young ...*

— Charles Wright

The inventor faces a dilemma, literally an impediment. He wants to save the little girl who swallowed a charm, and he wants to save the charm as well. For himself. To begin the exploratory process, Dr. Chevalier Quixote Jackson asks:

How to extract, say, an open safety pin without scarring?

How to save the key without employing anesthesia?

How to preserve all 2,000 items—and even before that concern, to whom does a foreign object belong?

*

How to answer a wish to possess:
tuck a chess piece into a cheek.

To meet a hunger not to share:
swallow a kewpie doll whole. To admit

a puppy pleasure: suck
on sock or crayon.

Recall the rubber of a nipple with pencil eraser.
Safe-keep an inmost assemblage

by stowing in ribcage. A child's collection

always hidden or held. Saved
(*I saved her—!*)

like Dr. Chevalier Quixote Jackson,
19th century laryngologist,

who removed from tiny upper bodies
an involved collection of objects

he then nestled into trays of cotton:

nails and bolts, radiator key,
a child's perfect attendance pin,

a Carry-Me-For-Luck medallion. Yes—

removed and preserved along with

the stunning x-rays of safety-pins

lodged in one or another child's lung. Also
a charm

in the shape of a hound.

*

Children crawl on the treacherous floor--

*

After the grandmother died in a car crash,
the little granddaughter figured,
Grandma now lives inside my chest

with dog, bird, and fish. As well
the tiara she lost at the circus. Yes,
surely, the lost things are just *socked away*—

what will be in store for her—?

*

Neighborhood boys bound, blindfolded and shoved Jackson down a dark shaft. His traumatized laryngeal nerve rendered him unable to call out. Then, a dog discovered him and kept barking until his coal-miner owner clambered down to see what the damned dog was up to. He extricated the boy from the dark passage. He saved him. [*Swallow*, p. 55]

*

In my cigar box, a swallow nest of pine
lined with feathers, bits of birch bark, and trash

exhibits how comfort differs from comforting,

from a shred of blankie inside her purse to
his rabbit-foot keychain to

the sock lodged inside the retriever's gut
even to the hair she plucks and swallows

in a cycle of self-harm called *Rapunzel*.

*

What the mother gave—one hundred ivory elephants inside a tiny red
seed—differs from what the daughter tucks away: miniature dictionary,
bathtub boat and babydoll comb.

*

The girls could not open the door to the father's home, the carton of detergent and cans of stew were stacked so close to the threshold. The girls could not open a window for the medical books leaning against the panes. No entering the childhood rooms where, somewhere, their mother's ashes resided with towers of *Life* and *Look*, boxes of tongue depressors, a suitcase of scrubs. And the girls' own teddy-bears, once pink, once blue. Maybe *Parcheesi* and *Sorry!*. They could not climb a ladder to the bedroom window to check on a mahogany bedroom set they knew to be surrounded by black bags of mother's clothing, tagged years ago for Goodwill. Maybe there, too, a hand-sized ivory nude, a woman's body used by nineteenth century doctors. The girls wondered what he saw in her—

*

The doctor's x-rays are so captivating
I long to steal them, arrange them
in my hall, back lit, for all to view:

the miniature binoculars, the little horse-charm, the four open safety
pins—

each fixed between a child's ribs. More,
each feels like a story's dénouement:
the heroine dropping into a cave,
discovers a treasure that cannot be removed
unless she answers three questions:

What is the opposite of 'cleave'?
Who serves nuts in a golden tureen?
To whom does a juju belong?

*

101 More Things Removed from the Human Body TV-special featured items removed from people including a 3/4 inch drill bit through the head, a pipe through a motorcyclist's chest, pocket knife embedded between the eyes, sword fish sword through a man's eye—

*

Then again, there are the mundane or sensational objects removed from the rectum (the ubiquitous light bulb or hamster) and the perineum (needles, nails) and the penis (Christmas tree lights, snake). (But what about the stripteaser flashing a razor in and out of her labia—?)

*

Why the children swallowed:
alone on floor with pile of buttons
put toy in his mouth to hide from sister
playing with a tin cup containing a white pearl button
playing around wicker chair
child alone in room found hairpin under pillow
bored or unhappy

*

Stays. *She preferred to swallow stays*

*

How to answer a wish to save:
stick a kewpie up your nose.

How to answer a wish to taste:
stick a dime up your nose.

How to answer a wish to cherish:
down the hatch!

And a wish to ward off?
charm, juju, talisman--but a stay against what?

*

Wishing that the object belongs innermost
also means that one belongs to the pea-sized button,
the milky-blue marble,
the doll-sized clothes pin, the the the—

the children crawl on the treacherous lawn.

So, is there a fourth question? Of course: where does the body end?

CONSTANT OBJECTION

More often than not, a house will fill up
on sale items, with only tepid objection
to a dozen glue guns, a case of Brillo pads,
jars of preserves. But--coffee cans
of chewed up chewing gum?

*

Notice that the simplest often yields the most:
object: body, stuff, organism, meaning, purpose,
idea, hope, butt, doodad, ... mind and resist.
A theory as well: Pinky-Bear,
Blankie, Sock-Puppet, Nightmare.

*

Objection? Outside a neighborhood clinic
three fundamentalists waited
to shoot the doctor at point blank range.
Meantime, Father saw Medusa everywhere:
on the clothes line, under the sink,
in the box of cereal.

*

He drew the ball of hair
that no one can stand or he'll turn to stone:
curly alive hair. Then there's vermillion nail polish.
Then there's his own week-end father
taking him to "Boxing Kangaroos"
who turned out to be whey-faced strippers.

*

Oriented: days after she died,
I criss-crossed the city on a bus
peering out at the concrete
when cherry blossoms fell in my hair
from no open window. They
piped up, *What more can a daughter bear?*

THE OLD HOUSE SPEAKS

Before I was foundation, I was a chicken-coop a ways from farmhouse, carriage house and barn. And around my grounds, someone's daughter played with her frozen-charlotte doll. Among stink and chicken feathers. Egg shells. Nests.

I taste the shit in the air. Inhale the motes of dandruff and chicken manure. *Chicken shit.* The taste of my own mouth.

From the planks and wire I heard the clucks. The coos. The scabby rooster at his gate pecked like the son's paddle-toy.

I wasn't so much humble, as small. There is nowhere for anywhere except a runaway where the straw smells dank and brown and soiled. Fresh.

The farmer's little girl played with her frozen-charlotte baby. Among chicken feathers and grain and kitchen scraps. That all became, finally, a trash heap.

(Nowdays, it's funny to hear *Barneyard*--a wine drinker might think *notes*. A drunk, *let's get shit-faced*.)

Noisy and noisome. From that scabby rooster to this: raccoons and birds and mice leave droppings all over my insides.

Birds tear my screens. Branch and ice rip me open.

Did I say *a runaway*? More recently, down the hill in one family's garage, the mother turned the car on and fell asleep to the smell of gas. Closing the door to other neighbor's husband.

I wince when, after winter torpor, the raccoon births her kits in a closet.

Some say a raccoon makes over two hundred sounds—and it's true—I've counted.

And the mask—that camouflage that reduces glare at night.

And the ringed tail! stores fat for the winter and aids in any balancing act!

And washing of food, yes, "wash."

The big male leaves paw prints in the dust and debris. Shitty prints on the grocery circulars and coupons that flood the floorboards. Even on artwork left lying on a table or desk. There is nowhere where there is no shit.

Yes, where creatures thrive, I cannot breathe—

What will become of my kitchen? The room where the now-elderly woman, when a toddler, sat in the porcelain sink for her mother to sponge-bathe her. One of the few events here in these rooms that she cares to recall, she sifting through the rubbish, once her mother's home, her father's house. ...Or was it the other way around?

BOXES WITH RESPECT TO WORDSWORTH

Three Tiny Clothespins

Wood and metal, I pinch you open
for doll clothes, cotton or silk. Gauze,
as well. Pinch onto a string—a
fishing line is *jocund company*—all
in a row like our socks and sweaters
on a cord in the boiler room where
cold is stored.

Tin Cookie Box for Sewing Items

When I was eight, Mother covered
a cigar box in calico, red and
orange floral. She stitched on a
loop and button to latch the lid.
Inside: red pin cushion, six spools
of thread, a few stray buttons. A
needle-threader I didn't understand.
A whiff of tobacco means mending.
You, cookie box, are still vacant, and
I, *in vacant or pensive mood*, want
everything from before now inside.

Scissors in the Shape of a Stork

When I saw you, I had to bid on you. And won! And although not the scissors that belonged to my friend's mother, *My heart with pleasure fills* of a time when squabbling was a show of little-girl tenderness. Funnily enough, the only scissors I use are the nigiri shears my ex-husband's mother lent me decades ago.

Old Dog Collar, Small

My first dog wore you, now decades-old red leather. No one could guess that I'd clutch you while pup and I lay together on the floor listening to the pianist in the apartment below. The scales. The etudes. The solitude—that *inward-eye*. Sad, that your name-tag was lost.

Japanese Five-Yen Coin

I think I wanted you for good-luck in love. Yes, *oft, when on my couch I lie* that's what I think. Not in Pleasantville or Cedar Rapids. Not in Nicaragua. And never in some 1976 godforsaken Bed Stuy storefront apartment where at night boys pissed under the door. Or maybe yes there. *Oft*.

Folding Fan Advertising Kikkoman Soy Sauce

Because of my *vacant ... mood* I save stuff. I think I wanted to decorate my memory palace, not realizing it was already so, even given eviction and theft. There goes Auntie's lacquer teapot! My kindergarten handprint in clay! Pearls! But you never belonged to me. I'm not sure I even care about you, odd ephemera in the debris of my childhood, Father's home. Evidence, let's say, of home. Or, at least, of Father.

Sand Dollar

Oh, calcium in radial symmetry! Oh,
little creature so unreal! Oh, urchin
mucking along the foreshore! Oh, I
but little thought / What wealth the
show to me had brought: I lifted you
from the shallows and now I'm filled
with sorrows. There was a great deal
more to you than your home--than
my pathetic currency.

EPIGRAPHS

selected by Kimiko Hahn

[for *Air Pocket*]

But the Parsee came down from his palm tree,
wearing his hat, from which the rays of the
sun were reflected in more-than-oriental
splendor, packing up his cooking stove, and
went in the direction of Orotavo, Amygdala,
the Upland Meadows of Anantarivo, and the
Marshes of Sonaput.

—“How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin,” Rudyard Kipling

[for *Ear Shot*]

They say that folks misuse words, but I see it the other way around, words misuse people. Usually when you think you're saying what you mean you're really saying what the words want you to say. It's just like a drunk piano player I know who says that when he's drinking he plays where his fingers take him. Well, once upon a time they took him straight into the biggest church in town and got him thrown into jail for playing “Funky Butt” on the godbox, which is Mr. Fats Waller's name for the pipe organ. One never knows, do one, as he used to say.

—“A Song of Innocence,” Ralph Ellison

[for *The Unbearable Heart*]

...when is closure an ending?

—Melvin Dixon

[for *Volatile*]

What kind of beast would turn its life into words?

—“Twenty-One Love Poems,” Adrienne Rich

[for *Mosquito and Ant*]

Speaking, writing and discoursing are not mere acts of communication; they are above all acts of compulsion. Please follow me. Trust me, for deep feeling and understanding require total commitment.

—*Woman Native Other*, Trinh T. Minh-ha

[for *The Artist's Daughter*]

We look at the world once, in childhood. The rest is memory.

—Louise Glück

[for *The Narrow Road to the Interior*]

By nightfall, we come to Sōka, bony shoulders sore from heavy pack, grateful
for a warm night robe, cotton bathing gown, writing brush, ink stone, necessities.
The pack made heavier by farewell gifts from friends. I couldn't leave them
behind.

—Matsuo Bashō, translated by Sam Hamill

[for *Toxic Flowers*]

We trace analogies; as if it were
A joy to blend all contrarities,
And to discover
In things the most unlike some qualities
Having relationship and family ties.

—*Memoirs of the Life of Sir Humphry Davy*

[for *Brain Fever*]

Things that make one's stomach churn

the reverse side of a brocade
the inside of a cat's ear
newborn mice, hairless and pink, squirming from their nest
the seam of an as-yet-unlined leather robe
a dingy dark recess
a homely woman tending to her sizable brood
a woman who has been sick for a spell---she must strike her
lover, especially if he is not that caring towards her, as
distasteful

—Sei Shōnagon, *The Pillow Book*

A PASSION FOR VARIABLES, THE CLIPPING MORGUE: AN INTERVIEW WITH KIMIKO HAHN

Kimiko Hahn's unerring sense of coming up against, again and again, the sublime wonders surrounding us is not limited to material existence, it extends naturally beyond what we know as Nature to everything there is to know around us via language; she is as adept at noticing something awe-worthy in a word as she is often awed (and sometimes amused) by what's unfathomable in flowers, stars, or within our brains. To pay homage to our existence comes with Hahn's love of being impressed with our existing at all. Her poems have been recognized with an American Book Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Theodore Roethke Award. She lives in New York where she teaches at Queens College, City University of New York.

JUBILAT: *Kimiko, thank you so much for agreeing to join jubilat in this conversation.*

Your first book, Air Pocket, appeared in 1989 from a venerable independent press, Hanging Loose (founded in 1966, it distributed loose leaf packages of poems, and took on book publication in 1972; run as a collective with homes in Boston and New York, Hanging Loose authors include Sherman Alexie, Ha Jin, Charles North, Maureen Owen, Hettie Jones, and Paul Violi).

Your most recent book, Brain Fever, 2014, comes from Norton (a press with a different kind of history, on a different scale altogether and also known for its list of poets: among many many others, Major Jackson, Simon Armitage, Cathy Park Hong, A.R. Ammons, Joy Harjo, Agha Shahid Ali, Adrienne Rich, Rita Dove, Dorothea Lasky. Norton's also published a book of poems by Jesus

Christ, “words of Jesus Christ...restored to their original poetic form,”—that came as a surprise.

I’m not looking for some big generalizations about the whos and hows of publishing poetry; however, should any come to mind, please go right ahead. Poets are faced with hundreds of choices when it comes to sending their poems and manuscripts out into the world.

KIMIKO HAHN: Choice is one thing and acceptance a whole other—

When I first sent my *Air Pocket* manuscript out, funding for small presses was rapidly shrinking. I noticed that Hanging Loose Press published emerging writers and was still operating full speed so I sent a letter of inquiry. Months later (due to snail-mail), we started a correspondence and eventually they accepted the collection. Lucky for me, Bob Hershon and Donna Brook lived in Brooklyn so we could all meet. Hanging Loose Press was (and is) very supportive and allowed me to suggest cover art: I asked Tomie Arai and she ended up designing covers for both *Air Pocket* and *Earshot*. It was very very hard to get a foot into the publishing realm but once in, HLP took very good care of me.

I later tried Jill Bialosky at W.W. Norton. I was enthralled with Adrienne Rich and with anyone who would publish her. Jill is simply a magical editor (I’ve written about my experience with her on the Poets Out Loud blog, “A Poet and Her Editor”).

These days as I try to figure out what my next collection will look like, I’ve been published in chapbooks: Small Anchor, Coconut, Epiphany, Center for Book Arts, Ghostbird. I’m now collaborating with Tamiko Beyer for a Slapering Hol chap. We are super excited about what’s become a lyric “corresponding.” I’m not sure one can immediately tell where she leaves off and I begin.

You're in a position to have observed a lot about what publication means to poems. I'm interested in the transformation that takes place from inside a poet's mind, a private place, by way of words and poetry's essence, to places in which poetry is published and distributed, a public place. That trip from inside to outside is what I hope you'll address.

I know many poets are asked about audience/readers and years back, when asked, I wasn't sure how to answer. I was not aware of "anyone" except for an occasional poem. I think my initial drafts are talking to myself. During revision, I listen and I twang the metal. In the real world? I'm still surprised when someone comes up and thanks me for writing, say, "The Hemisphere," a long poem on Flaubert, Oriental sex tours, Orientalism, and my own coming-of-age. When my work comes into other people's hands, the encounter feels like both a surprise and a gift.

Before we get to talking about your poetry, might you talk a little about all the extracurricular work you've done to take care of poetry and poets? You've guest-edited journals, judged, run chapbook festivals, helped create an MFA in Creative Writing & Literary Translation Program at Queen's College, and you're now serving as board president at the Poetry Society of America. What is it about these supportive roles you've found remarkable?

I did come up during a time of cheap living in Manhattan and a measure of support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Economically the 1970s and '80s may have been easier decades to be a poet. Women and writers of color were just breaking through, so while I know that my expectations were lower than today, there was a radiant hope and drive. I recall the difficulties and intensities of those years. If I can assist in small or broad ways to make a difference, then the grass-roots part of me is working. I am socially motivated to assist...although I must say that I'm feeling a bit weary (how many blurbs can one do a year?)...

The most satisfying? Our ten-year-old MFA Program has midwived wonderful writers and writing. I was just on an AWP panel with two alums, Rajiv Mohabir and Zakia Henderson-Brown. Another alum, Pete Vanderberg just published one of my chapbooks with Ghostbird Press.

Regarding the Poetry Society of America: I love working with Alice Quinn! Her energy and vision are so genuine. She and the staff work to keep programming relevant. I am the one who benefits from her irrepressible spirit.

Over the years your publications have come in a steady stream: nine books, chapbooks, individual poems and selections.

Your second book, Air Pocket (Hanging Loose, 1989), has in its middle, this poem:

Spring

I am very happy
lying on this rug
beside the dog, listening
to the constant roar
of spring rain.
Everything I need
is here—even the desire
now drawing me
to the window to recall
the deer wandering
in the city of Nara
As they gather around me
I feed them cake
from a hand
in my childhood.

Thank you for bringing up this little poem “Spring.” I’ve always felt pleased with how the tiny article “a” alters the view. Hopefully it urges the poem to be as much about memory as it is about a specific memory: “a hand”? Mine? Someone else’s? The article becomes a portal to another time. The title also suggests both the season and the verb, springing back to the past. Of course I wasn’t conscious of this when writing/editing—I was unconscious of it!

Such word play was a part of my education in Japanese aesthetics—aside from Western puns and double-meanings. I tried to let it rip in *Brain Fever*, to really work the language especially when it comes to nouns and verbs. So in the first poem, “Alarm,” there are words full of multiple meanings: **vanity** [dresser and excessive pride]; **brooch** [jewelry and broach]; **loafers** [shoes and to loaf]; **trench** [coat and entrenched]; **profile** [side view and police profile]; **alarm** [clock and panic]; **forecast** [weather and prediction]; **fidelity** [exactness and faithfulness]; **violate** [fails to comply and assault].

The words become, as with “spring,” a portal into a more spatial reading experience. The reader is not merely in a room, but in a very tense emotional moment inside the speaker’s body—I hope.

There’s a formidable, possibly fearless, sequence of word play in the beginning of The Artist’s Daughter—notable information, plus what that information does inside a reader’s mind: for example, I’d become affected by the death of your mother that’s first written about in The Unbearable Heart (Kaya Press, 1995) and after other significant, life-changing developments.

There is a before/since/after/never-ending knowledge of her death that registers as an abiding and indefinable love. This love/this fact of before-and-after her death continues through all of your books.

When you begin to examine necrophilia in the opening pages of The Artist's Daughter, you create circumstances in which there is a profound announcement of your being unafraid to go where language association—and the possible parallels of metaphorical composition and/or understanding—take us.

I don't want to slight in any way the huge effect of what matters to us as we continue to experience the death of someone we love; when I register what's raised, brought into view, as a kind of question, perhaps, "is an abiding love of someone who's died a kind of necrophilia?" When I first read the beginning of The Artist's Daughter, I felt the feeling of the thought of that—maybe a shocking thought—to be possibly inescapably and humanly wrong, right, and inevitable all at once.

I was also affected when I read in Robert Richardson's very good Ralph Waldo Emerson biography, The Mind on Fire, when Richardson wrote about Emerson taking his dead wife out of her grave so he could look at her. Likewise when death appears in Emily Dickinson's poems, you don't forget it.

So "is an abiding love of someone who's died a kind of necrophilia?" Yes. A refusal to let go, to let the dead stay buried. (I thought that Emerson embraced his wife!) Also, for me there is another facet: that my mother's death was a concretization of her absence in my childhood. A visualization. My sense was that she was always in a different room. My abiding anxiety is that maybe she didn't want to be in the same room with me. If this is a constant in my work, how to deepen rather than repeat across years and collections?

Necrophilia and exhume felt like two thematic means to both connect and "dig deeper." The use of sensory images and diction such as *mendicant friar* and *vinedresser* potentially present a new figurative and physical experience that I can explore. What does one exhume from the past and what happens to it? Does a memory, like a corpse, collapse into dust? What is abiding?

Brain Fever's final pages are composed of a brief essay, "Luminous Vapors," a section of Notes, and Acknowledgments of a more complete kind than we ordinarily see; many times I like to think about the extra—maybe it's not "extra" at all—apparatus that comes with a book. "Luminous Vapors" can be seen as an invitation to readers to write their own poems. Sort of like saying, "See, here's how I do it, no reason you can't do something like it too, if you choose to."

I felt a bit off kilter after *Toxic Flora* and gave myself writing assignments. One was to take an article and use it for a number of draft poems; each one had to be under a certain number of lines and include a quote. I hoped that I'd at least get a couple of poems from each, and happily, I ended up with a number of series. And varying approaches, including erasures. I think I intuited what the text called for, what my relationship is to that text's call, if you will. I am increasingly drawn to formal elements, so making up formal requirements is wonderful play.

Getting back to the stuff at the end of the book, I believe that it's important to give credit, especially in the case of "stealing." Also, the list of *New York Times* writers is a bit show-off-y. I have notes in other collections where I list the original triggering line—in *Brain Fever* that is the case with the "Consciousness" series. I always loved seeing Adrienne Rich's notes, and of course Marianne Moore's were infamous!

I was glad to have the chance in *American Poetry Review* to address Japanese aesthetics, in part because I don't think many readers are aware of their impact on my writing experience. Well, in general there is little known about those poetics other than the simplicity of the haiku. But I've gone much further: in the haiku, for example, the odd number of syllables (17) and lines (3) create an asymmetry; in such a short form, words with multiple meanings burst the poem open, again, against a linear reading. Also, what we might refer to as literary allusion produces the same burst. Here are two tanka examples from *The Poems of Princess Shikishi* translated by Hiroaki Sato and rendered in the original monostich:

Night cold, I awake and listen: a wood duck cries, unable to
brush off the frost formed on it

—Anonymous, *Gosen Wakashu* [compiled 951]

The sky as a flock rises grows snowy, lucid, dark: in my icy
bedroom a wood duck cries

—Princess Shikishi [d. 1201]

Her poem in the 11th century would have conjured up for her aristocratic readers the anthology in 951, the person waking to the bird's sad cry as it is unable to shake off the frost. The 31-syllable form bursts open, spatially.

To continue addressing the importance of Japanese aesthetics in your development as an artist, your book The Narrow Road to the Interior (Norton, 2006) starts off with "Compass." It's filled with fact and association and a playful tone that's dead serious.

Dear L—

You asked for a *little compass*. Thank you!

I was looking for a definition of *zuihitsu* from my shelf of Japanese texts, but discovered none gave more than a sentence or two. None seemed especially scholarly—which might be a good thing. None offered the sense of disorder that feels so integral. Here is what I did find:

Literally, "following [the impulses of] the brush," and consisting of brief essays on random topics

—Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart*

[Miscellany]...partly of reminiscences, partly of entries in diary form

—Arthur Waley, *The Pillow Book*

[S]tray notes, expressing random thoughts in a casual manner

—Makoto Ueda, *Earl Miner, ed.*

Zuihitsu is a form you make use of throughout your books; it's open and generous and seems infinitely pliable—and I'm sure much more than that...

Context: I was studying Japanese literature in the '80s when Ed Friedman at The Poetry Project invited me to a millennium celebration of Sei Shōnagon. I was very familiar with *The Pillow Book* but it had never occurred to me to try my hand. For the event I wrote "Downpour" (*Mosquito and Ant*) and enjoyed the room available to consider themes and subjects. For *Narrow Road*, I collected ten years of what I considered *zuihitsu*, then revised so the individual pieces together in a collection. I think now, I was a bit reckless—which I don't see as bad!—and the pieces are more *The Pillow Book* meets *Paterson*. More of a collage imbued with Japanese aesthetics. I like a sense of disruption and illogic. I hoped that the dingbats added pacing in an individual piece but even more important, that they framed sections that could be regarded as whole. A fragment that is "complete," if you will. From "Sparrow":

*

The brown branches, the pink moments.

I was at a loss.

Was marriage my imagination? I look at photos of cheery tanned profiles from little family vacations and cannot know what I was thinking.

*

The zuihitsu that I've written since then are less collage and a bit more conventional: a "stray note" or a lineated catalog. I've taught the zuihitsu in workshops and craft classes and although I say the best way to comprehend the form is to read *The Pillow Book*—I do not mean to suggest that the form is a free-for-all. Just the opposite. Some have taken the pliable nature too far. One needs a semi-conscious comprehension of Japanese aesthetics (Donald Keene's *Appreciations of Japanese Culture* is a good starting point).

Another thing that interests me is the relative straightforwardness of epigraphs, and notes and acknowledgements, as these contrast with the manners in which information is broadcast or knowledge is presented in poems. Notes and epigraphs, etc. are not typically oblique or subtle or indirect—at least not at first glance. Will you talk some about your relationship to these different means? [see list of Hahn's book epigraphs preceding this interview.]

I see that I was positioning each to be "a compass": Kipling's *Orotavo*, *Amygdala*, the *Upland Meadows of Anantarivo*, and the *Marshes of Sonaput* suggests a lot of thematic possibilities (quest, wandering, Asian, Colonialism, childhood, etc.) but most important is to feel the sound of words. And I hope that the Ellison quote, "... words misuse people," invites the reader to engage in word play.

Shrouding the writing of poetry in mystery has sometimes seemed to be an unquestioned conventional requirement, kind of like when "God Save the Queen" or "Hail to the Chief" convene occasions during which kings and queens and presidents enter the premises.

You're doing exactly the opposite of this in your opening framing of the book with explicit (and witty) statements about where pieces of the poems were found originally. Depending on one's mood, "Kimiko's Clipping Morgue: BRAIN file" can be read as a poem, or as fictionalized found material that plays with how an index can be a wonderful thing, or as an outline of what's on the way.

Honestly, the working title of the collection was *The Clipping Morgue* but no one liked it because very few knew what it referred to (I was a research assistant in graduate school!). I felt the title perfectly set up my use of resource material. So, with my usual willfulness, I wrote a piece that would act as an introduction, a claiming, a *zuihitsu* (in list/index form).

Will you talk about other forms or constraints you've benefitted from as your poems have come into being?

The list form is everywhere. Especially in *Brain Fever*, as I described earlier.

Would you tell us about any necessary actions or situations or superstitions that go along with the circumstances of your writing?

I'm not aware of any...when my daughters were young I had to write in coffee shops because there always seemed to be too much distraction at home, laundry and such. But in the past few years, and certainly since I've begun writing on the computer, I've dropped that practice. Practical not superstitious.

Is there something you thought you'd never do, or that you refrained from doing, that you're exploring? Either formally or thematically, shape or content, and so on.

For instance, I used to think there were some things in the world so perfectly poetic already that for me to elaborate in any way would diminish them; well, that's changed; those perfectly poetic things are still the same and still everywhere around us, and I know I'm capable of diminishing anything by mistreating it or neglecting some aspect of it quintessential to it, just as I know I'm incapable of just about everything, however...my understanding now has a greater range and less timidity governing it.

What poetry is capable of doing has pointed out the limited and limiting foolishness of a good many previous misconceptions of mine, and now I would happily write about the mysterious wonders of how and why and the fact that a certain fish's eyes migrate over (and sadly at times get lost inside if a mistaken route is chosen), over from under to above from birth through adulthood to arrive on their bodies in the region we typically associate with eyes, or I wouldn't hesitate to include something about certain migrating bird's having half a brain asleep and the other half awake while they transport themselves across space, at altitudes reaching 37,000 feet, to unerringly arrive at their destination.

Ha, well, if it can be said a human being's destination is inevitably to die, I guess it doesn't seem such an astounding wonder to achieve. In other words, it doesn't seem unusual for a writer to have self-imposed restrictions or hesitations.

First: I love that your own operative word is migrate! When I started writing, I was reading Ferlinghetti and e.e. cummings...then in college, Louise Gluck and Charles Wright. Also Japanese writers. Now, I keep returning to Dickinson. I think the arc suggested is one from open verse to formal restrictions that may or may not be a received form. I was certainly a product of my times. I would never have guessed that I'd write a sonnet or sestina.

You've written that "Japanese is vocabulary-poor," meaning, I'm understanding, that the number of words is fewer than in some other languages, though what those fewer words can do may be more.

Japanese is known to be especially "rich in words with multiple meaning." Will you say more about this?

This *vocabulary-poor* language has produced homonyms galore—as I brought up earlier. The sound *shi* means 4, poetry, death. *Matsu* means pine and waiting. So one sound has that bursting property, that portal property

that I mentioned. Poor in number of words, but rich in multiple meanings. In my workshops I give the English example: *pine, rose, leaves, hedges*.

And the poets and writers you work with—they seek to find other words of this kind—words with layers of meaning, some contradictory, or seemingly so? What is the name for words with contradicting definitions—I never can remember it. Always a good excuse to visit Merriam Webster—contronyms. Hasn't it been satisfyingly good how Merriam Webster so carefully comments on the news of the day with their most searched word of the day feature—treason, fascist, fact? I love how they are saying how thoroughly one word matters.

Contronyms are also called *Janus words*. I didn't know about that word of the day feature so I'll have to check it out.

What do you think you'd like to do next? Are there any forms or themes you are leaning toward exploring at this time?

I think I'm at a new juncture.

Speaking of restraints, in *The Artist's Daughter* there is a modest sequence, "Charming Lines," where I made up the exercise: seven sections with seven lines, six of those lines end-stopped, one reference to a fairy tale but mostly odd "personal" images, and most important, each section had to include the line, "As she twirls around, her skirt swirls up." I wish it had been completely iambic, but anyway, I wanted a tone and image that was both innocent and sassy. A year ago, I was feeling restless; my work didn't have much electricity. So I recalled that my editor especially liked "Charming Lines." I've been fascinated by keen juxtapositions as can be found in some haiku and tanka. So I took my lead from that little sequence. From "Constant Objection":

Objection? Outside a neighborhood clinic
three fundamentalists waited
to shoot the doctor at point blank range.
Meantime, Father saw Medusa everywhere:
on the clothes line, under the sink,
in the box of cereal.

As for themes, I believe that somewhere in childhood, a person's identity theme/s are set. (This phrase is from the biography, *Swallow*, by Mary Cappello.) Much of my writing has to do with jealousy or betrayal—that is, fear of loss—and I imagine I will continue these for as long as I can express myself.

★ **AMERICA** ... ★ ★ ★
is
is
speaks
wears a
is a
is a
★ **& NOT** ★ GOING
★ **ANYWHERE!** ★ ▼

**BLACK
NATIVE
SPANISH
HIJAB
MIGRANT
WOMAN**





Photographs on pages 70-72 by Jessica Baran.

DITHYRAMBIC GERANIUMS

Matt Hart

Because the cranes are craning themselves
Construction giraffes, not the birds'
inky clouds—which are starlings beating
down The earth full of people—dear
inhuman beings—so covered in war, so tethered
to what fails us But the starlings go on,
the robins go on, the blackbirds and grackles
and eagles and owls They go on above
the fraying end games The massive
machines The moons and drones and
satellites' sleep Because because because,
someone thinks and hears a song
and goes through the whole day
wishing things were different, wishing

the gushing was an actual thing, wishing
for flying, of wax human wings, to hurl
erratic flamebolts of sequins and thunder
Colorful shrapnel Necessary but stupid
Dithyrambic geraniums always wish
they were birds, but birds, being birds,
don't wish, they go higher

HAVING A TOOTH REMOVED WITH YOU

Lauren Hunter

like winning the lottery as you fall into a coma or
literally having your face ripped off mid-kiss i keep
telling myself to change but still hate myself when
i am bleeding i consider it a failure of my humanity
which unlike yours is more than human i tell you
i am batman but unlike my heroic alter-ego i have
real superpowers not just an axe to grind and a really
impressive bank account maybe i spend
the time on my hands doing nothing
but what if i wake up tomorrow
and it's 1962 again i'd love to say
i'd stand up swinging but look at my record
mostly i'm dead asleep and even not
tired and useless
the terrible things i say about my unborn children did i mention
my neck has been bleeding for days and yet nothing
somehow i am the voice that insists *i be reasonable*
and it is killing me look
my hands are shaking this page is torn my heart is out of warranty
please return to point of purchase

SELINA KYLE'S APARTMENT

i'm a woman who wants things i'm a woman
with desires and lists of desires and one of those lists
is labeled LIFE GOALS and another the pages of my autobiography
some mapping evidence and some consequence lists
coming out my ears and yet nothing crossed off
except me i'm collecting indignant rage these days i'm building
mini monuments to revenge and desire and
groceries like this too-pink apartment filled with stuffed animals
i've never desired like the impulse to destroy your own home
because you deserve it i wanna go to a pity party where
someone else is the guest of honor i have nothing to say because i don't
know anything because girls who know things get thrown out of windows
and eaten by their own cats i think it is a miracle
every day my veins don't just burst and the walls stay so white
each day that i don't come around with paintbrushes and shoe polish
making the world
look like me an indeterminate number of gifts
have been given and lost welcome home

she's very good at the gentle and
she's very skilled at the narrow and she's very good and warm and nice
and
blood blood blood it's easy to forget

when the gloves come off (or on) and a woman is furious when a woman
decides to express her anger the sex appeal of a woman who doesn't give a
shit
and yet suddenly desires skin-tight clothing a woman with nothing left
to hide she destroys things because she feels destroyed duh anger
is so addictive and acidic pitiful and pink apartment encouraging all the
rage allowed

HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT: INTERNET CRUSH

is this overdoing it. my hands shake at my desk or in my apartment, I've confessed, not much, I'll confess. I've had this theory that the sun rises inside everyone, and I react accordingly. say you've known your whole life exactly what you are and what you want, but they still say no. do you get angry. do you take matters and do something serious with your own hands.

I stay in the house next door to yours—I just walk in like I'm sick and don't know any better, so your neighbors keep me; they don't even know why. I stay away from every window. I daydream about wood paneling on the wall or on the car, and I don't care what else.

if I give up one dream for another. if i follow your brother down the street or to california and shake his hand as if I didn't know.

nothing will ever work without a psychic connection in me, so there's that.

how could you trust a man's eyes more than mine.

IN WHICH THE ENTIRE FAMILY HAUNTS THE VITREOUS HUMOR.

Denise Jarrott

the visible
world without end world without
those I cannot see, cannot read
those prairie letters written over
the lines crossing over and over
to prevent paper waste
is opaque with
the cells the dust and the news

a density of particles in the eye

I could not see the image but nonetheless *it seemed like it would pass over*

that I doubted ever being in pain, even if I was.

darkness, in that it wasn't true

was total.

completely dark, or
or bright, bright
 white?

visibility: low, light either

do the blind see total dark

interaction of pain with memory .
the blue of milked over eye

to warn away dust blown into eye
layers worn—as in fabric, over time
to a membrane,
thin, fine

I wanted to find something in the grave
I excavated down past the site,
I handled the evidence with hands bared with eyes open.

that they made a home near the lake so to harvest ice :: everyone in my family wears thick glasses which makes their large eyes look very small.

that they used animal fat in lieu of soap, urine in lieu of bleach :: everyone in my family smells vaguely of lake water, blue algae, honeysuckle.

that they all knew how to paint dock wood, but only in colors that held up against ice :: everyone in my family turns aggressive in the winter.

that they all wore their hair loose and straight, they said prayers for souls which have departed from this vale of tears :: everyone in my family pictures the word vale as veil as valley as vault.

TWICE THERE WERE NO MIRACLES

Nathan Kemp

I feel more like I do now than I did
when I came here. My lust for afterlife
is the expansive glow that follows

a good meal, but the accommodations
are being rushed to completion,
the mountains are being gorged.

Such bumps don't deter the faithful.
They have all the danger of acrobatics
but none of the glamor. I'm sure

it's not for me. Anyhow, this is
a good place to die. I've picked
just enough berries then quit. The secret

of a successful worker bee is to be
made to feel an important part of the affair.
I was temperamental my first season.

Now I always bring a lunch along, just in case
someone else can use it, as if it were a wreath
I am to put on some stranger's grave.

CITIZENSHIP

Even in my most coniferous form
I would perish
without a heart,
but without the other
vital organs
and critical appendages,
I'll wither.

The creek told me stories
all night about how
passports mean nothing
to the mountains and cutthroat trout.
That is what is special about this place.

The world is missing
a huge puzzle piece
and, as you might guess,
plenty of people are eyeing the hole.
It is easier when a land is so wild that

its fossil fuels are left untouched.
What's good for the goose is better
for the gander. There are too many
things too valuable to lock away forever, but

I write this in a tongue
unrelated to any other
in the world, remote as this
rugged landscape that unfolds for days,
revealing a map traversed by people
for thousands of years.

REWILDING

The window screen doesn't
pixelate this world enough.

I still find it difficult
to be anything worth being.

The outdoors are so green
here, where I am from,
even if there's no doorbell.

How many wind chimes
have made a tinkling sound in the breeze
in both the east and the west?

This afternoon is suspended
from a frame near my window.

When I see white, I often see red. I read
about this in a book. The pages
weren't bleached, but natural to the touch.

700 SONGS FOR LURLEEN

David Kutz-Marks

"I'm a singer but I can't sing, and other times I've turned myself through
childhood experience
into some sort of contortionist, or divested myself of belongings and
gone into small occupations
like being a god or a body mechanic, so most of the time I could just sit
around

and look at what I had and hadn't done," but the most consistent thing
was I was sleeping
and this was what I loved the most about it, not really caring or
doubting what came of the things
I saw or I did, how the leaves seemed to progress in their color, with
no hands or sunlight needed

and stand there and admire themselves, as I did the same thing with
myself.
It's just that what we serve to intensify, putting on our hats, putting on
our glasses,
requires so much effort that the time it takes to change

is better spent in playing out what happens in the back room after all
the rearrangements,
the work and the cuts and the food and the exit, and making note of
necessary changes to perfect
the thing, but never really making any changes. The hand is not ideal
for really thinking—

it imagines there's a door where there's a door and there's a tree where
there's a tree
when what we really need is better telecom and whiteboards, and better
meeting spaces
but without all the fuss of creating them

saying the same thing again and again until someone expects it, accepts
it, and puts his hand in.

The mountain then erupted into foliage of seven different colors for a
century
and even after that, when they had changed, it was always still autumn
there—

and the woodcutters knew what to say to a person like you in the taiga
though they couldn't speak the bulk of any language. The clouds for
their part

held themselves so valiantly you couldn't quite tell they were signs, that
they held themselves
in protest of the things inside themselves, and in protest of their role,
the role of a mouth

and they, as we were, were given no power to change things, other than
maybe to occlude them on
occasion, to tell them we might slowly put them back, but we replace
them with ourselves.

ILLUSTRATIONS

A rash of geese appeared across the hillside, and after much surviving
the one got tired of leading the pack, and soon enough the V had
collapsed altogether
from the center, like an arch without a keystone. Where we were going
that weekend
was where we had gone every weekend before it, off to that one
counselor
meant to resolve all our tensions by waving her hands, “gesticulating
wildly,”
and coming up out of herself for a moment to take in the air.
It was very “domey”—that was all you could say for the place—and
now and then
the faint taste of iron hit your mouth, you had probably been chewing
on your lips all night,
after your paying the bills and affixing the postage, having left a little
bit of film on your lips
which tasted too strong, a little like whiskey, a sort of cheap bourbon,
that hint
of a licorice in there, defining the theme of the evening,
which was your muttering walking away for a while.
Another way to see it was a hole blown straight through the roof of the
V,
leaving two slashes that failed to converge in a V, preferring instead just
to float there,
but there was no real gravity in any of their thinking and I think
that’s how they got so far with it in time.
The evening was balmy and brisk, almost like a peach in color, really
something.

BOYS' BOOK
of
SCIENCE and CONSTRUCTION

ALFRED P. MORGAN

BOOK OF CONSTRUCTION

Cameron Louie

BOYS' BOOK
of
SCIENCE and
CONSTRUCTION

MORGAN



Light?

LOTHROP

BOOK [REDACTED] CONSTRUCTION

B
3 -

The Pressure of the Air in a Bubble.

[REDACTED]

the world consumes

delight.

Sunlight

Light.

Waves

dissolved in alcohol,

so that all the matter

may not

have cohesion .

at one time, years passed, years

filled with toil and disappointment.

and light.

SCIENCE AND CONSTRUCTION

...over the same burner, it will be found that the temperature of the water rises much more slowly than that of the mercury. The mercury, however, requires only one-third as much heat from the burner as the water to raise the temperature of the water one degree. In other words, it takes only one-third as much heat to raise the mercury to the same temperature.



Hence, water gives out more heat in cooling a certain number of degrees than mercury does. Water requires thirty-two times as much heat as mercury does to produce the same increase in temperature.

If other substances are tested in the same manner, it will be found that the quantity of heat required to produce the same increase in temperature varies with the substance.

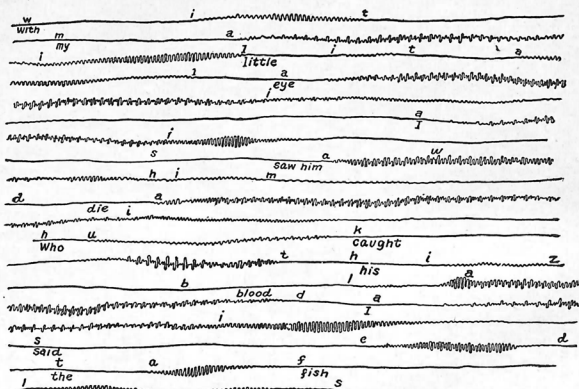
You have experimented with all sorts of materials and have calculated the amount of heat required to raise a certain quantity of a certain quantity, one degree. This is called the *specific heat* of the substance. The specific heat of a number of substances is given below.



Water of ocean currents. The ocean may part with a large amount of heat in winter, thus becoming very cold, and on the other hand receive a large amount in summer with out becoming warm.

Why Water Puts out a Fire. The fact that water is so good a material for absorbing heat and is also non-combustible makes it ideal for putting out a fire.

underlying principles of form



A sound picture of the words

You can not get far away from

"fire"

reason,

lined with

artificial light

the variously shaped pieces of

posing

glazed

com-

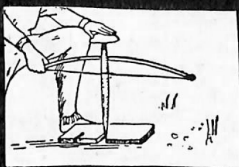
and then

You yourself can easily

make Light

shape Light

press LIGHT mean Light.



LIGHT

an almost endless variety of

material

COWBOY MANNEQUIN

Morgan Mansour

1.

Bless twelve
details. A tonic pales
me. Here, swallow—

you swing like you've
been through religion.
Cream dries on the side

of a cup. Tea stains
the edge of a wet
spoon. The night

ends lengthwise. Each
feather has a name,
each deity an eyesore.

Your concert to mistake
the pure. The pollen
will never leave. Wait

to call this kindness
if you have wrists
to fill your sleeves.

2.

The button-hole is
a brevity

The wet will
howls; knuckles

I sift,

you sleep.

A blind body hears

white sheets.

not a tool but
to use for closeness.

lacks. Metal

pool the mesh.

your eyes could soak
soup. While Sunday peaks,

how you turn in your

seat; it's nobody's
news you're harder

to please than

MY LOVE IN STRANGE PLACES

Katie Naughton

you home some place we've never been before
winter sidewalks the city sky traffics
up the avenue the river lighted
red even in red time winter I make
you the city a bowl of red waiting
the edges I wait you wait the weather
we were here once stood under the neon
late light and cold you were eating bread
you were someone else I took you and you
again to one corner second and ninth
changes day fares people passed while time while
most things stay mostly things you again you
eating me making you home again red
weathered time my love returns a city

...

the chorus of history stopped the snow falls
all afternoon I stay inside my loves
industry I keep me under snow warm
in sleep the snow stops the house the light
comes down my love in darkness unmakes me
making time dinner the lamp of kitchen
window throws against the eaves you don't
fit in this poem your silences your distance
your time your kitchen you in my kitchen
in my silent time you making you me
of sleep and failing light the wrong turn
that history kept on while I did not
saying to me my my my time you you
do exist you do exist you do you

IT TAKES A LONG TIME

Diana Khoi Nguyen

Punched into life, I was against everything
The favorite word among youth is 'No'
Over time, A gives birth to B, C, and D, A alternating each nipple into
the bracelets of their open jaws
A kiss is still a kiss
Say you love someone to death
Keep one eye on the world, they say, and the other on the cock inside of
you
A priapic skeleton is human nature
The puppet feels the hand sometimes, wildflowers would gnaw their
own roots if only they possessed two opposing teeth
When you're a nomad you need portable art; when you're a slut you
need a broken vibrator
This suit is in agony—let us pull death right off each other's bodies
Wake up, paint a door on it and walk right through
Maybe I'm placated except I stepped on my dead brother's toothbrush
in our dark bathroom
How do I move from night into more night, bartering my grief into
smaller parcels
Species, like a sibling, molder right on time
Let the loss back in from the stoop, we both know I haven't had enough
I was always a craven bitch, all abandonment and plagiarism
Vivaldi, Cicero, Aristotle, female poet, radially symmetrical aliens
Underneath their skirts only some girls have cunts
Bird on a barbed wire fence
Just south of Bakersfield, a woman put her five-year-old daughter out to
die on the center divider of the I-5 and the daughter ran after the car
“for a long time”—how full of vitality she was

We are left behind in the interstices of our legs
Marriage, flatulence, so can we get on with it?
Run and shooed, shunned and fed, a lot of boys I know are dead

THE UNEXPECTED PORTLAND
EVENING IN WHICH I TAKE A
JOYRIDE WITH TWO REPUBLICANS: A
MARRIED INVESTMENT BANKER ON
BUSINESS AND OUR MISS OREGON
CONTESTANT UBER DRIVER WHO
RAN FOR CITY COMMISSIONER IN
MAY

The most lonely person I've ever played is someone ruled by fear and ferocity
I'll have the five-course, sancerre, erotic freedom, dark glue
Unlike these baby birds stunned by their wings I know to use my hands as
hooks

Here kitty, kitty, kitty

The tiger from the Gaza Strip zoo is headed for refuge in Africa
In the worst zoo in the world, painting stripes on donkeys just about covers
the situation

I want so badly to expose my self, to be understood, to be seen in the most
naked way I can

The fell or filament must be kept intact or the flesh will crumble
See hope, see hype, see wireless revolution, see the caul scraped free and
pumiced to a thinness approaching non-existence

The two-way: a fawn in Gaza set to be evac'd died after being wounded,
Syrian conjoined twins evac'd from Damascus died of heart failure while
awaiting surgery

Of communal feasts which have become a rarity among us
There's nothing left but to wait for our meals like animals
So like the man beside me orders the five-course at the same time and
like each dish arrives at the same time even though we are both
treated as the separate single diners that we are and finally the man
turns to me and says do we like how this tastes
The only way to be sure what you have seen is a good man is to follow
him to his downtown hotel and wait until he dies of old age and then
examine the body
Republicans tell me they simply can't stand NPR
YOLO
And so we come to the denouement, in which you learn that I did not
get out of the Uber
Little passes through us: just enough to allow the necessary exchange of
savors
If the ride ends, it is never just the end
My autobiography: I swallowed a sword and was surprised by how good
it was, how it opened me up

VERNAL

Leah Poole Osowski

The equinox passed
two equal halves

unnoticed. Day lined up
back to back with night.

Spring measuring their height
with her thawing hand.

Twelve hours tall each
and then a swell of light.

Coaxing buds and bare legs.
Pollen a tongue tip drug.

Crocus throats thrusting
through dirt, cicadas

turning seventeen scream.
Nine o'clock geothermal

blue. Your lagoon hands
holding anything they can get

their heat on. Dusk
a dish thrown at a wall.

A wall a row of poplars
overpopulating the yard

you can't stop sleeping in
twenty Junes from now.

CALLED BACK

Ali Power

On our ship
there are no guns
if you break the rules
you stand in the middle of a circle
of 10,000 people
who each say I forgive you
there's no punishment
only rewards for jobs well done
but there's no money
every day we contemplate death

I don't know what it is about yellow houses
but when I pass one on a back road
in western Massachusetts
I experience a deep longing
to caress your leg hair
I see a goat and tell no one
eat all the asparagus
I don't want to have a body

At the graveyard wishing well
my crotch is hot
at the creek
crud accumulates
along the edges of a low bridge
you fashioned out of driftwood
and a pure heart
the dying firefly

holding up your head
is a door
opening

from THE LAWN IS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

*What makes us think, or why would we want to think, that the
more we know about people the more we will like them?*

–Adam Phillips, *On Balance*

*What would we be doing together if we were not getting to know
each other?*

–Adam Phillips, *On Flirtation*

On the first night we ate potato salad
I put on an album from the '90s for us to makeout to
there were more fireflies than usual
vast nets of bright panics
beatific beats enabling our conditions
on the first night I had no trouble making a fire
all week I kept saying "look" and pointing
you love nothing more than a great reduction
you fell asleep on the scenic drive I planned
you burned the popcorn then I burned the popcorn
I resented you as you took off your clothes
I resented you as you kept your clothes on
and asked me to remain without moving
you resented me for moving
your tongue was moving too slowly
like a sleeping cow
all week we were unconsciously signing invisible contracts
then deleting and revising them
then signing again
we got tired and didn't know why

you didn't appreciate the lake
the bugs bothered you
you swat at them like a tantrum
you used too much dish soap and I told you so
you told me to take you to the train station
I dropped a book in your lap to keep you from crying
"we would never had known if we had never heard of knowing"
for the rest of the week you quoted the book between sobs
after all was said and done we ate breakfast burritos
but it wasn't all said or done
today the pool is pea soup
and you're in an office calling people by their first names
the city is unchanged and unseasonably cool
I don't know what you're selling
my thighs keep getting bigger
there are bugs all over them

DIAGRAM POEMS

Jessy Randall

Otherwise the game is the same as before.

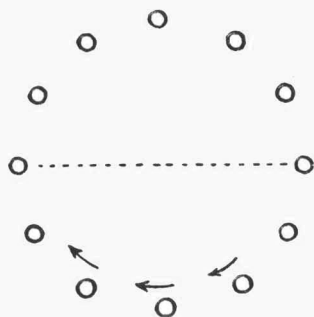


Chart showing how unfair everything is

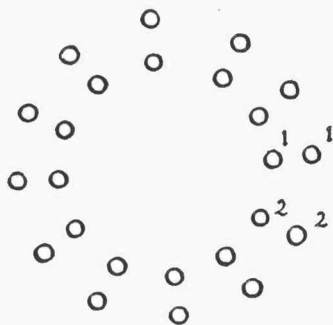
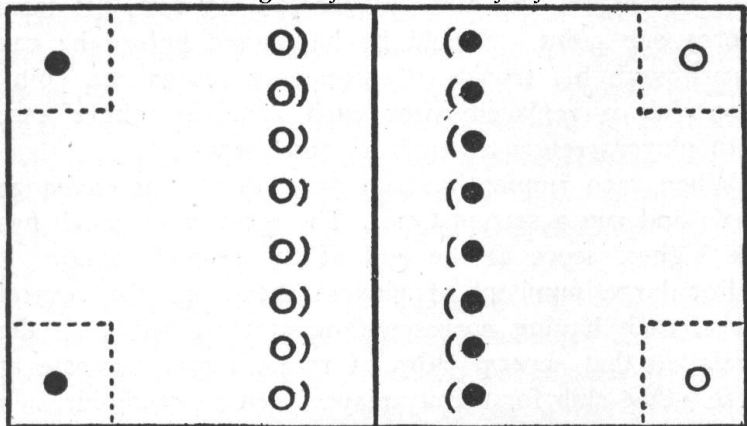
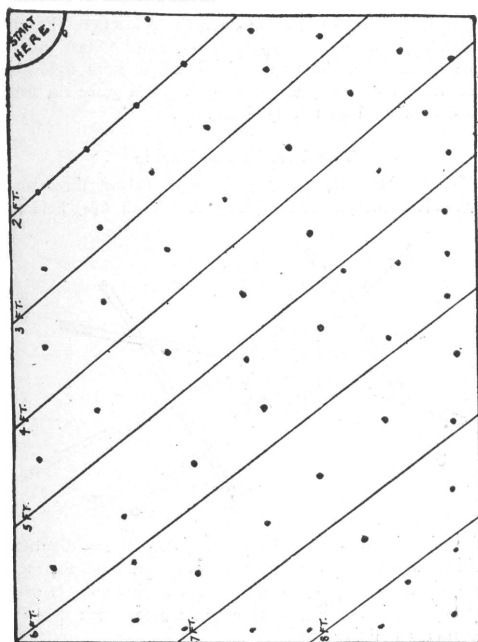


chart showing that you are secretly my favorite



QUIET GAMES

chart showing that the way you listened to music when you were a teenager is similar but not identical to the way your children listen to music now



WHITE-SNOW GO BOARD

Shen Haobo

Once again
I return to chilling Beijing.
Seen from the plane,
Beijing
is covered with thin snow
like a
white go board.
Who plays the game with me?
No one.
We gaze at each other
above the board –
I and a blood-red setting sun.

IN EVERY CONDO, THERE IS A GIRL PLAYING THE PIANO

In every condo
there is
a girl
playing the piano.

I haven't seen
any one of them.

Girls playing the piano
never come out
into the light.

Not until one day
after many years
the piano suddenly stops
do I notice
the condo has collapsed.

I remove the rubble
and see
a transparent finger
identical to the one in my mind.

With love in arms
I pull her out,
kissing her grey hair
and her face, with deep wrinkles.

NIGHT OF HUALIEN

A silent
night with sea breezes.
A broad,
empty highway.
A snail
crawls slowly.
A motorbike passes.
In its whizz
you can still hear
a
crack.

Translated from the Chinese by Liang Yujing

THE DESERT

Brandon Shimoda

consciousness

...

occluded by

desire

desire for the

future

fruition

of the hour

and its

subsequent murder

...

...

no

attachment to it

...

we're all sitting

in a circle

...

...

to think

we won't all disappear

that is when I

pip'd up

...

I fell asleep on a rock

...

...

shamans prioritize

sleep, a
rich sleep
no, the stations of
the cross
suns
and flowers
growing in the suns
...

attempts at understanding
the incarnations of surveillance
understanding is the incarnation
skin is skin

understanding
is becoming
the thing in the skin
the hearing child
the deaf parents
the child like a bar of soap
leprous parents

...

...

becoming sworn
to ritualize awe

...

...

...

...

...

...

There. I was traveling
Through the Alps
To get to the moon
I had to be Heidi
And sleep with the cows
All my parents were there, encouraging

THE DESERT

Don't burn any bridges
Daniela said
How many bridges do we need?

...

Don't go anywhere
Don't go anywhere
But into a passive perspective
Service, like

...

...

People passing out with their necks open
Cannot SEE the blue lights
They're negative eggs
They swallow themselves
Spinsters in candles
Apparatus that sparks
A bull, there are
Novas being arrested

...

Is there really a land
With islands of grass
And yellow birds
Even idiotic are affable

...

...

...

Trying to unscrew
But it's okay, the bridge
Will survive
The burning of the atmosphere

...

Day One in the
Desert, I brought a book
To the park
And sat in the grass

...

Ants
Came out of the earth

from DESTRUCTION OF MAN

Abraham Smith

///

enter wooden roots
to drill and stir a hope
if i pass this way again
the learning to unhand
the things that lived
what's harder and
out of our heads
both less and more ourselves

///

a metal for consumption-ing
and booom land open
the plough tugged open it
dead bomb got mind
got thin

///

the fork and the knife
yr no longer a little one when
tips and edges
sharps and serrateds
can't seem
weapons we make nice with

///

eating one stabs one's face just not quite
and over the stone fence of the teeth
an offering
along above against upon
eternal the yoke the tongue
built everyone
the fox and you
for teat O thread of
a white three falls
crooked line
from above ranging
the uncharted woods
of skin to end in blouse
wastey lichen a little musk lake

///

up from beat
couple hundred million mosquito
nascar bag war
nosy needs flesh's under river
buncha palm kilt nothings
bugger after tractor time
hang on wind
in the open arm posturings
of the skin seed wood tick

///

is a living button
thirst its cause
a living button
its 4eyes
the thread
corset penitent
there is the body
a leather bag and there is the mouth
attached with no pain
drinks in deeply
less and less itself
so is the button
a progress
or is the hole
buttonholed
one's heart's pour
in its mouth
the tell-all
made by hands
missed the boat
ethos low
only touts
a swinger's couch
a singer's thread
the stabbing action
the purple mouth

///

i used to think of what if a mosquito if a skeet bites me
and the dog and the rat and the bear of the beauty in
such rare couplings a little knack shack

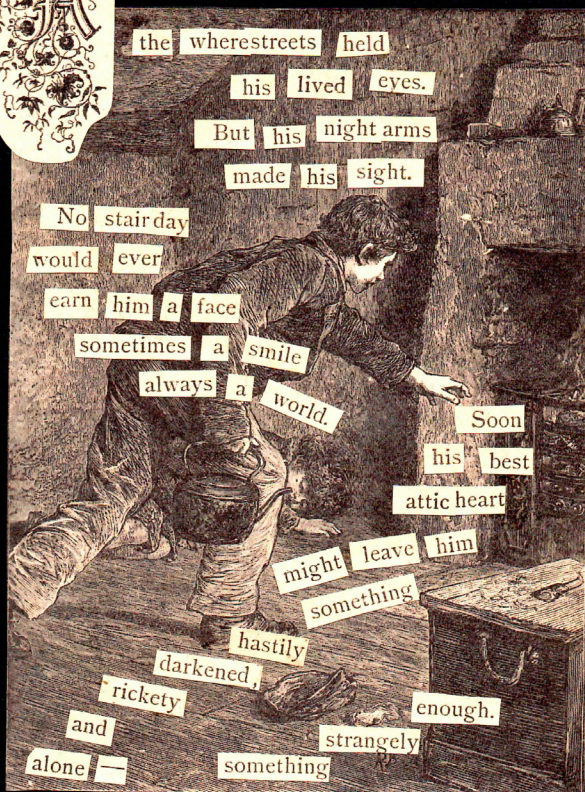
fanned full of warm strangers
next year's next life's sting band

///

now i dream winter's washed
dried and put away white plate silence
when bites stop then
a head its own season then
its own pair of dice bossed then losing it? take and whiff
old musk lake the wrench no cunnings
it's just what you will lake
spring turning summer
gathers up in the folds of a packing afternoon
the sun a mouth
more than hand the ring on with it
allow swallows
your finger and you'll never hold
a thing the same and what
you are capable of holding
is another way of
unspeaking your name

THAT LAST
ATTIC-HEART RISING

Amy Jo Trier-Walker



the wherestreets held

his lived eyes.

But his night arms

made his sight.

No stairday

would ever

earn him a face

sometimes a smile

always a world.

Soon

his best

attic heart

might leave him

something

hastily

darkened,

rickety

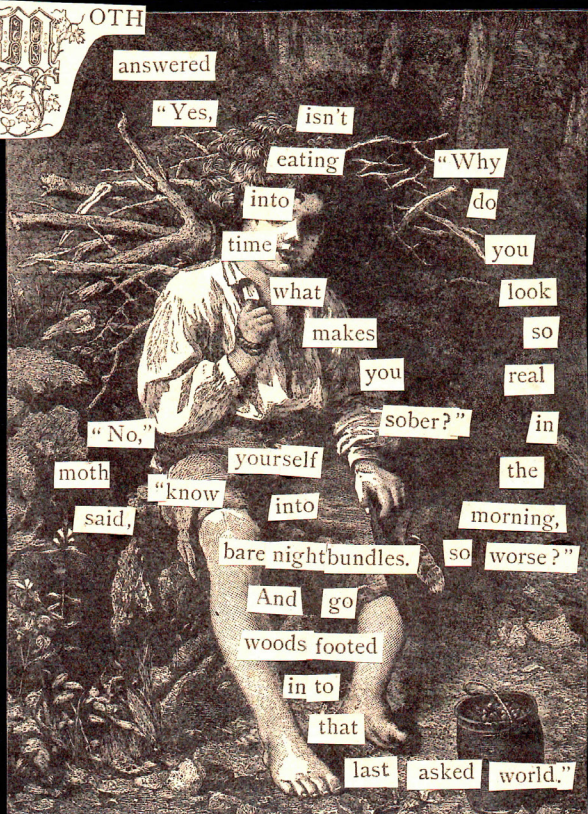
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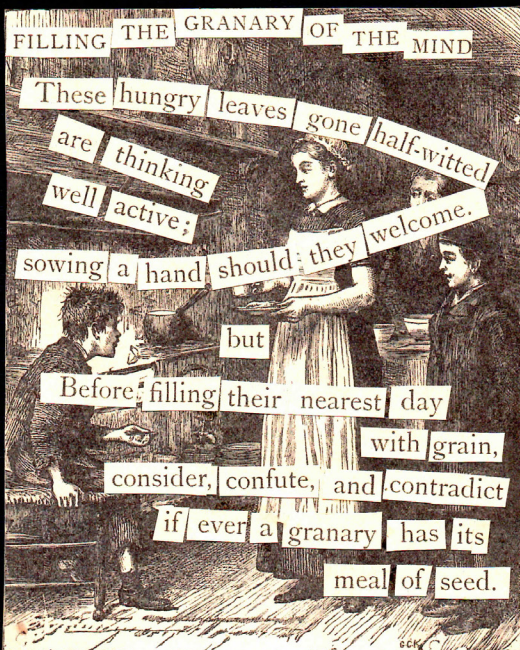
alone —

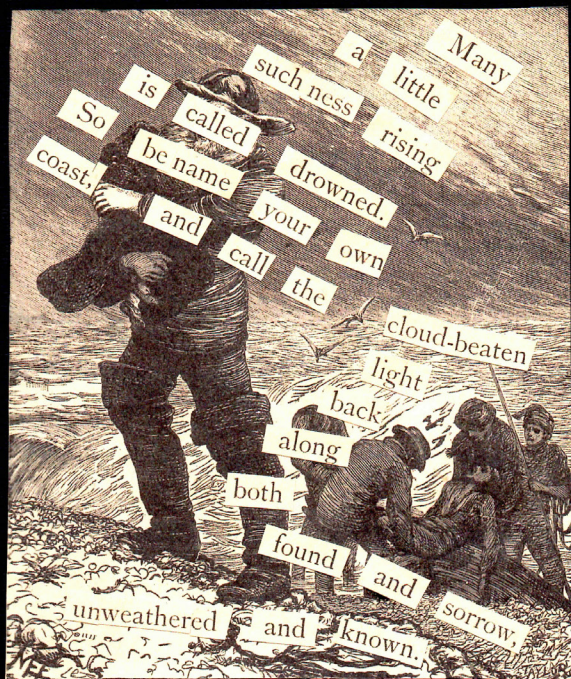
enough.

strangely

something







COUP D'ETAT

Florencia Varela

The table was gone when I walked in.

The fridge was next.

Making my way through an apartment

too small to hold much

to begin with,

each piece of furniture

or trinket gone

from the corner where

it once belonged.

Being alone doesn't exist

without other people.

I'm sorry we are in this together.

Whether the rooms were empty

is another question.

KAVANAGH

It's a building
I've seen
one thousand times.

If you've seen
anything
one thousand times,
you know:

in grief,
we own.

When I own,
I exist.
I go on

to take on
everything to heart.

What I own
I can bury.

When that
baby died,
it wasn't
mine,
that was

that.
She was born

when she was
buried.

When I try
to say anything
one thousand times:
 That was
 that.

In my Paris
Nothing happened.
I charm myself.

I will have
always had.

She with old
eyes and cats,
she who lost
a child,
buried herself
into the city's walls.

In grief,
we build.

A building I had
seen one thousand
times over.
When I own,
I exist.

Without warning
I remember
everything
about her face.

If you've heard
anything:

to be a woman,
to be a city,
is to bury—

in—
in spite—
in spite of.

DAY OF RECKONING

Ryan Walsh

What if it's like this

snow day

instead of mayhem

tranquil

like a pillow

or a pill

roads schools bridges

closed

churches stores

neighbors helping to dig out

the white

drifts swallowing

marble steps

the Capitol

teased into a sledding hill
in bright coats
we lay down
and make angels
on this day
no dog bites no
bee stings
no inalienable rights taken
no shootings just
flakes like ashes
from a feverish world
gentling down
on our noses
and eyelashes

WATCHING BREED

Felicia Zamora

The Terrier's muscles keep the innate; action
sews in; what *ready* resembles when the hay bale
lifts; quickness defines; *gasp*, you gasp; canines
& incisors sink into the body of the rat; the
Terrier shakes death deep in another; how you
witness & your head imitates, back/forth; how
brutal & *bothersome* arrange us; how you, unable
to look away, lick your lips in disgust of you.





LET LOOSE
A CIVIL
BELLOW



Here at our sea-washed, sunset
gates shall stand

A mighty woman with a torch,
whose flame

Is the imprisoned lightning,
and her name

Mother of Exiles..

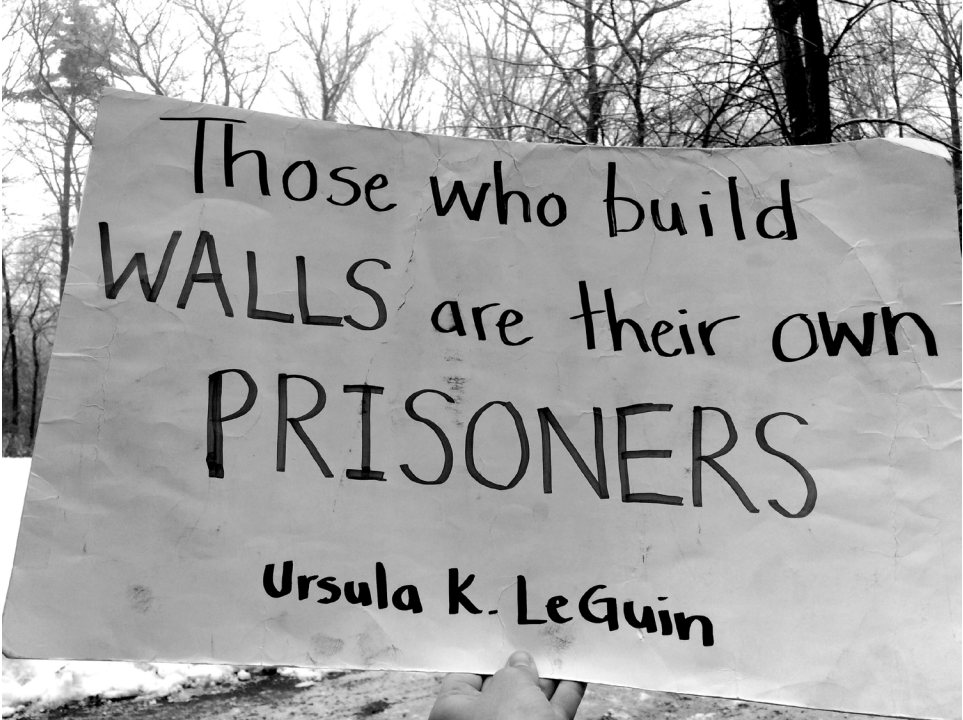
- Emma Lazarus



**BABIES
AGAINST
THE
BINARY**

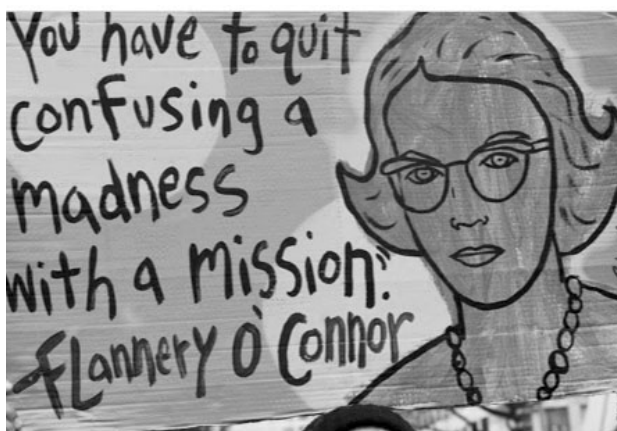
**ABUSE
OF
POWER
COMES
AS NO
SURPRISE**



A black and white photograph of a hand holding a piece of crumpled paper. The paper has a quote written on it in black ink. The background shows bare trees and a snowy ground.

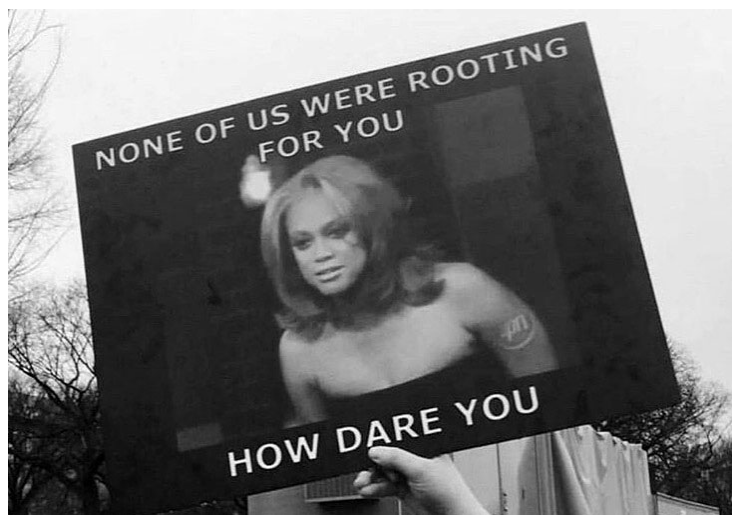
Those who build
WALLS are their own
PRISONERS

Ursula K. LeGuin

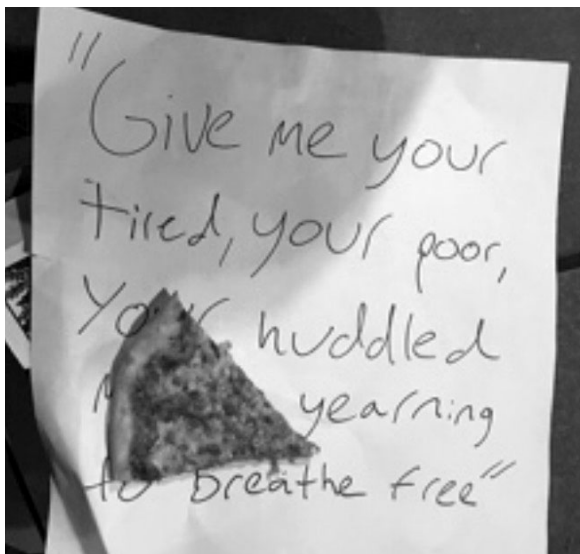


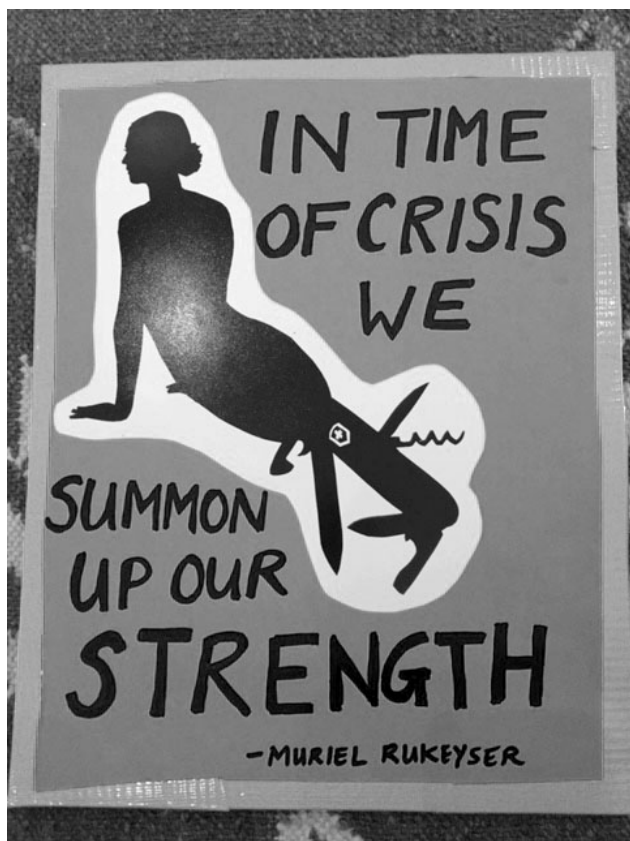






I KNOW SIGNS
I MAKE THE
BEST SIGNS
THEY'RE TERRIFIC
EVERYONE AGREES









WHEN I BUY PICTURES

or what is closer to the truth,
when I look at that of which I may regard myself as the
imaginary possessor,
I fix upon what would give me pleasure in my average moments:
the satire upon curiosity in which no more is discernible
than the intensity of the mood;
or quite the opposite—the old thing, the medieval decorated
hatbox,
in which there are hounds with waists diminishing like the
waist of the hourglass,
and deer and birds and seated people;
it may be no more than a square of parquetry; the literal
biography perhaps,
in letters standing well apart upon a parchment-like expanse;
an artichoke in six varieties of blue; the snipe-legged
hieroglyphic in three parts;
the silver fence protecting Adam's grave, or Michael taking
Adam by the wrist.
Too stern an intellectual emphasis upon this quality or that
detracts from one's enjoyment.
It must not wish to disarm anything; nor may the approved
triumph easily be honored—
that which is great because something else is small.
It comes to this: of whatever sort it is,
it must be "lit with piercing glances into the life of things";
it must acknowledge the spiritual forces which have made it.

Appearances of Eternal Presence

My love of “When I Buy Pictures” arrived when I first read that great Latinate syntax opening up the poem, that precision, that acknowledgement of how fabulously syntax participates to make sense of how we think and say and write; and then I’m smitten over another kind of precision, the kind generated by attention, seeing and, in this case, a simile with metaphor in it, “diminishing like the waist of the hour-glass”; anytime *time* becomes at issue in a poem, I’m going to be arrested with an awe of time’s omnipresence; and then I admire so much how Moore ends that particular passage—which had been dense with detail—with another kind of summary registering: “and deer and birds and seated people.” I love “an artichoke in six varieties of blue,” for purely private and personal reasons. I like how “waist” and “wrist” echo one another’s presence. And soon arriving where the poem starts to give me shivers: “It must not wish to disarm anything; nor may the approved triumph easily be honored/ that which is great because something else is small.” I like how the poem looks, because it looks down the left hand margin as if it is made of stanzas though it isn’t. And the end of the poem, the final line of it, such a giant and beautiful conclusion.....

—DARA WIER

“When I Buy Pictures” was first published in Thayer and Watson’s DIAL, July 1921.



Appearances of Eternal Presence introduces a new, ongoing feature: Each issue we'll invite someone to select one poem long out of print to be included in jubilat; the poem will be accompanied by a brief note. Selections will also be featured on our website: www.jubilat.org

CONTRIBUTORS

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